



PRESS RELEASE

June 1, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sheila Johnson and Lewis Parker Are Named 2023 Loudoun Laureates; Two LCPS Seniors To Receive College Scholarships

The Loudoun Laurels Foundation has chosen Sheila Johnson and Lewis Parker as its 2023 Loudoun Laureates, seeing in them the personification of qualities it seeks in all candidates for the annual honor: selflessness, integrity, creativity, wisdom, and courage. This year's selections were drawn from an exceptional pool of worthy candidates, notable for its quality and quantity. In its deliberations, the Advisory Committee remarked on the difficulty of their task, acknowledging the many people who contribute so much of their time, energy, and resources to make the county a better place. In the end, they found Sheila and Lew to be great examples of that giving spirit.

Lew Parker's careers in two independent industries have had lasting positive effects on Loudoun County's economic base and overall prominence in Virginia and nationally. In the role of engineer, technologist, and business executive, Lew's contributions in the medical device arena have improved the lives of millions of individuals suffering from debilitating orthopedic conditions. The company he and his son-in-law founded with other global leaders to produce the devices, K2M, grew quickly to become a leading high-tech employer in our region.

Lew's other passion is winemaking, a craft he learned opportunistically from outside experts and through considerable trial and error in his pioneering efforts. His Willowcroft Farm on Mount Gilead would become the first winery established in Loudoun County, spawning an industry now populated with scores of growers and wineries, many producing award-winning wines and supporting a robust local tourist trade. The Willowcroft Foundation endows science-based scholarships through the Community Foundation and the Loudoun Education Foundation.

Sheila Johnson is widely known as the co-founder of Black Entertainment Television and is the only African American woman to have ownership in three professional sports teams—the Washington Capitals, Washington Wizards, and Washington Mystics. She is also founder and CEO of Salamander Hotels & Resorts, whose portfolio includes the resort and spa in Middleburg, Virginia, a Forbes Five-Star-rated hospitality destination that draws influential guests to the region, promoting the local community, and employs many residents from the area as staff.

In keeping with Sheila's lifelong commitment to the arts, which began with her own training and performance as a concert violinist and later as a music teacher, her philanthropic work includes promoting arts and education to underserved communities. A strong believer in women's empowerment, she has served as a global ambassador for CARE, a leading humanitarian organization that combats poverty around the world through the involvement of women. She also spearheaded the formation of WE Capital, a venture capital consortium dedicated to supporting and investing in female-led enterprises.

In addition to honoring exceptional community service for the benefit of Loudoun County citizens, the Loudoun Laurels Foundation seeks to develop future civic leaders through scholarships and mentorships. Each of its scholarship awards is made in the amount of \$40,000 and dispersed in \$10,000 annual increments during a student's four-year undergraduate study at a Virginia state institution of higher learning. Since 2013, the Loudoun Laurels Foundation has awarded 25 scholarships, totaling \$1,080,000, to Loudoun County Public School (LCPS) students.

The Loudoun Laurels Foundation has awarded scholarships to two LCPS students this year. The awardees are Elizabeth Portillo Morejon, a Loudoun County High School senior who will attend George Mason University, where she plans to major in nursing, and Josmar Hernandez Chavez, a Woodgrove High School senior who will attend the University of Mary Washington to pursue a course of study in international business. Both scholars participated in LCPS's program, College Achievement Minority Program for Unique Students (CAMPUS), before graduating this month.

Sheila Johnson, Lewis Parker, and the 2023 Loudoun Laurels Scholars will be honored at the 2023 Gala to be held on Friday, September 22, 2023, at Lansdowne Resort.

The Foundation's Laureates include Childs F. Burden, G. Kimball Hart, Eugene M. Scheel, Karen Hatcher Russell, Paul Ziluca, The Honorable Joe T. May, Lang and Judy Washburn, James P. Roberts, The Honorable Robert E. Sevila, Stanley Caulkins, Fred Drummond, Dr. Edgar B. Hatrick, III, Su Webb, Joseph L. Boling, Dr. John H. Cook, III, Cate Magennis Wyatt, J. Hamilton Lambert, Margaret Morton, The Honorable Thomas D. Horne, The Honorable Betsy Davis, William Harrison, Fred and Karen Schaufeld, Al P. Van Huyck, Kristina Bouweiri, Di Cook, Chuck Kuhn, Punkin Lee, and Sandy Lerner.

For more information, including tickets and sponsorship opportunities for the gala, please visit loudounlaurels.org.